Soon after the Sowdrop it rises its head above the bare earth, and unfolds its golden cup.

"Lowly, sprightly, little flower!
Herald of a brighter bloom,
Bursting in a sunny hour
From thy wintry tomb.

"Hues you bring, bright, gay and tender,
As if never to decay;
Fleeting in their varied splendour,
Soon, alas! it fades away."

PATTERSON.

The leaves are all radical and grass-like—the root a corni,—and the flowers large in comparison to the plant.

THE MEZEREON

(Daphne Mezereum).

Octandria, monogynia—Nat. Ord. Thymeleæ.

This pretty shrub is well known, more from its finding a place so often in the cottager's garden and in the parterre, than from observing it wild in the woods, its native haunts in the southern and midland counties. In some districts it seems to be such an especial favorite with the peasantry, that it is almost the only flower they cultivate in their little garden plots, with the exception of the honeysuckle, the polyanthus and

the double daisy. One reason of its being so prevalent is on account of its early blossoming, for it blooms even whilst the snow is on the ground, and

"All love to see
Thy simple bloom, Mezereon tree;
The thrush his sweetest minstrelsy
Is pouring forth to welcome thee;
Thy store of sweets the early bee
Hath sought with ready industry,
And prizing much thy beauty, we
Are come to greet thee joyously.

"Long shalt thou hold thy gentle sway,
For when thy wreaths must fade away
Beneath the summer's scorching ray,
Thy stems shall glow in vesture gay,
With scarlet berries,—rich array."

BOUQUET DES SOUVENIRS.

The whole shrub is erect, forming a compact bush, and bearing a profusion of rose-coloured blossoms, growing in clusters of three all over the stems, and appearing before the leaves. The flowers have hairy tubes, and are succeeded by red berries, which form a pretty contrast with the light green foliage with which the shrub is then clad. Cowper alludes to it in blossom thus:

"Mezereon too,
Though leafless, well attired, and thick beset
With blushing wreaths, investing every spray."

Another reason it is so prized as a garden flower, arises from the delicious fragrance it exhales.